DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 222 413 SO 014 298

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TITLE India: A Land of Contrasts. How to Develop Pro-Active Action Student Awareness and Understanding about the Third World in South Asia.
INSTITUTION Global Horizons, The Center for Applied Ecosocial Studies, Plaistow, N.H.
PUB DATE Sep 82
NOTE 25p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Critical Thinking; *Cultural Awareness; *Decision Making; *Developing Nations; Elementary Secondary Education; *Global Approach; Learning Activities; Models; Social Studies
IDENTIFIERS *India

ABSTRACT

This document presents a critical thinking/decision-making model to help students in grades K-12 understand East Indian culture. It is divided into three sections. Section 1 provides background information about India from the 15th century BC to the present. It briefly discusses religion, independence, political organization, social institutions, industry, population, and agriculture. Section 2 presents a "pro-active action model" (PAM) which consists of strategies to affect student perceptions and understandings. The model begins with student perceptions based on previous knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The final step is accomplishment of a goal. The third section contains a sample unit on India for grades 3 through 12 and an example of the pro-active model. Students view films, hear resource speakers, examine maps and artifacts, make a relief map, and study religions, urbanization, and the monetary system. Using the PAM model, students role play government officials and experts who must plan ways to avoid a famine brought on by crop failure. (KC)

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INDIA: A LAND OF CONTRASTS How To Develop Pro-Active Action Student Awareness and Understanding About The THIRD WORLD In South Asia

Richard O. Peters, Ed.D.

GLOBAL HORIZONS

September 1982

SP 014 298

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard Oakes Peters received his Bachelor of Science in Education and Master of Education degrees from The University of Maine (Orono); pursued doctoral studies in Social Studies Education at The Florida State University (Tallahassee); and was granted the Doctor of Education degree from The University of Rochester (NY) in the field of Curriculum.

Dr. Peters has nearly twenty years of experience in the field of American public school education (K-12) as a classroom teacher of the social studies; ESEA Title III project curriculum researcher; social studies department chairperson; social studies curriculum coordinator (K-12); administrator/director of a five year curriculum development/research project funded by the National Institute of Education (NIE) U.S. Office of Education; University of Maine summer session instructor in curriculum development; social studies curriculum development at The Florida State University laboratory school; and founder of GLOBAL HORIZONS.

GLOBAL HORIZONS: The Center for Applied Eco/Social Social Studies exists for the purpose of innovative curriculum design and development (K-12) in areas of global cultures and natural/social environments.

Dr. Peters has been published extensively in the fields of cultural and social education by several periodicals including Environmental Education Report, Journal of Environmental Education, The Journal of Geography, and Social Education.

In 1982 Dr. Peters was a recipient of a Fulbright summer seminar grant to study the history and culture of India (June 30 - August 10). INDIA: A LAND OF CONTRASTS is a result of that six week study throughout India.

STATEMENT

INDIA is among the four largest countries in the world; only China has a larger human population. It is two-thirds the size of the United States but has two and a half times more people. It consists of several diverse regions (each having its own distinct personality) which are linked together to form the nation.

India is a vital part of Asia; a continent with more than half of all the people of the earth, and it is the most important of the world's non-communist "developing" countries. As a non-aligned power, India has assumed a leadership role among THIRD WORLD nations - since its independence in 1947.

While custom and tradition hold a strong grip on daily life (especially in rural villages) there is also evidence of modernization and the quest for betterment; in the daily lives of the people as well as the economy and productivity of the nation.

Skyscrapers and apartment buildings rise into the sky next to mud-dung huts and ancient temples, and the crowded streets of Old Delhi and Calcutta give way to the expansive western-style boulevards of Bombay. One can travel

from the snowy peaks of the Himalayas in Kashmir to the deserts around Delhi and on to the sandy beaches of the coastal plain. India is a land of diversity and similarity; it is truly different - but is the same.

BACKGROUND

Around 2500 BC the highly advanced Indus Valley Civilization (Harappa Culture) developed in India. After this time India experienced a succession of invasions in the north.

Indo-Aryans	(15th Century BC)
Persians	(6th Century BC)
Greeks	(3rd Century BC)
Syrians	(1st Century AD)
Muslims	(2nd Century AD)
British	(18th Century AD)

In turn, each conquering group effected the development of Indian culture and history. Elements of each group's culture can be found in India's contemporary economic - political - religious - social institutions.

The essence of Indian history is the essence of Indian religion which can be divided into three main periods: ancient (2500 BC - 8th Century AD), medieval (8th Century AD - 18th Century AD), and modern (18th Century AD - present). The major religions of India are Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Islam. Lesser religions include Christianity, Judaism, Sikism, and Sufism.

In 1885 the Indian National Congress (INC) was formed and for sixty-two years led a rather peaceful struggle for independence from British rule. On August 15, 1947, India achieved its freedom from foreign domination. Twentieth Century leaders for independence included Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, M.N. Roy, and Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

Upon the eve of independence princely states merged into two separate states; India (Hindu) and Pakistan (Muslim). Today, India consists of twenty-two states and nine Union Territories.

In 1952, India conducted its first general election for both the Federal Parliament and the several state legislatures. The electorate was based on adult franchise and numbered over 180 million.

According to K. M. Panikkar, since 1947 Indian

democracy has shown notable courage in dealing successfully with difficult and complicated problems like the reorganization of Hindu society by legislation after full public debate, the changing of the economic pattern of India by comprehensive and large scale planning, and the rearrangement of the territorial structure of the provinces. Another important factor which helps India to maintain and strengthen her democratic institutions is the rise of the new classes to power as a result of adult franchise. Elections based on adult franchise have brought to the forefront classes which had at no time exercised effective political power in India. In the 1980 General Election about fifty-five per cent of the eligible voters cast their ballots.

The Indian federal government consists of a President, Prime Minister, Parliament[1], and the Supreme Court of India. India's capital city is Delhi.

Each of the twenty-two states has its own legislature (Assembly), executive (the Governor is appointed by the nation's President), and court system (High Court). At the village level the Panchayat is the self-governing body.

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1 Bicameral legislature consisting of: **Lok Sabha** (House of the People) and **Rajya Sabha** (Council of State). Each member of Parliament is elected to a five year term of office.

The essence of caste is the arrangement of hereditary groups in a hierarchy. Today, all over India, caste restrictions are far less meticulously observed than they were a few decades ago (except in very rural/remote areas where life has not changed for centuries). Social institutions are changing, and this affects all social groups to varying degrees. Still, each caste has a culture which is to some extent autonomous; differences in dress, speech, manners, rituals and ways-of-life. The concept of "pollution" plays a crucial part in maintaining the required distance between different castes.

Since independence, India has made great strides in the exapnsion of industrial output. Today, it is the tenth most industrialized nation in the world. Throughout the 1970's India's foreign exchange reserves continued to improve - due to the growth of domestic industries.

Regarding scientific and technical personnel, India has the largest number - except for the Soviet Union and the United States. Among its noteworthy technological achievements are 1) atomic energy research for peaceful purposes, 2) the launching of Rohini, and 3) the successful exploration of the Antartic.

According to the 1981 census, the density of population is 221 persons per square kilometer. The current growth rate (for 1971-1981) is 24.8 per cent.

The proportion of urban population to the total population of the nation has increased from 19.9 per cent (1971) to 23.7 per cent (1981). This indicates very rapid urbanization during the decade of the 1970's. The five most populated cities in India are Calcutta (9+ million), Greater Bombay (8+ million), Delhi (6 million), Madras (4+ million), and Bangalore (3 million). According to Peter Stalker(Popline, June 1982) in the year 2000 both Calcutta and Greater Bombay will have an estimated population of 17 million and will rank 8th among the world's ten most populated cities.

There are millions of Indians who are fearful of urbanization and are promoting the development of rural villages. In this way, age-old traditions and values will be preserved, and the individual will not be forced to uproot himself/herself (from family and friends) and migrate to overcrowded urban complexes.[2]

Because of its tremendously large human population India has problems finding work for its masses. In 1981 non-workers (nationwide) constituted approximately sixty-two per cent of the total population.[3] In rural areas only

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[2] Richard O. Peters, "Rural Development: Combatting Urbanization and Developing the Potential of the Rural Village," National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration Report, August 1982, pgs. 182-185.

[3] Census of India 1981: Provisional Population Totals (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1981).

thirty-five per cent of the population are main workers (work a major part of the calendar year), approximately five per cent are marginal workers (work for a portion of the calendar year), and sixty per cent are non-workers. In the urban areas, approximately thirty-two per cent of the population are either main or marginal workers while sixty-eight per cent are non-workers.

India's population has increased at an alarming rate, not because of the birth rate but because of better health and diminished infant mrotality. The average life span has grown from 27 years in 1947 to 61 years in 1976.

In her book, ETERNAL INDIA (1978), Prime Minister Indira Gandhi stated that one cannot be truly human and civilized unless he/she looks upon not only all fellowmen but all creation with the eyes of a friend. Since man first discovered that he could use nature for his own purposes he has been interfering with his environment. Man is a part of nature and only one of the many species who inhabit the earth. But he has treated it as a colony to exploit. The inherent conflict is not between conservation and development, but between environment and the reckless exploitation of man and earth in the name of efficiency or profit. We have to prove to the disinherited majority of the world that ecology and conservation will not work against their interest, but will bring an improvement

in their lives. Man, whether in India or elsewhere, has a long way to go to understand himself and to realize his potential and to come to terms with the universe; not as conqueror and exploiter but as partner and sharer.

According to data compiled by M. S. Swaminathan in "Agriculture and the Environment", food production in India has increased from about 50 million tons in 1950 to about 135 million tons in 1981. "The progress made in food production during the last thirty years has been more than that achieved during the preceeding 10,000 years." In recent decades, India has experienced both the "green revolution" (especially successful in the State of Punjab) and the "white revolution". It is projected that milk production will go up from 30 million tons in 1979-1980 to 38 million tons in 1984-1985. The tasks ahead are certainly challenging. The present population is more than 700 million (700,000,000) by unofficial count, and it is expected to exceed one billion (1,000,000,000) at the beginning of the Twenty-First Century.

There are several types (or combinations of several types) of farming in India.

a) Rain-fed farming. Production possibilities in high-rainfall areas are similar to those in irrigated areas. The monsoon is vital to crop production throughout most of India. Without the monsoon famines will result and millions of people will be without sufficient quantities of food -- or may even starve to death.

b) Multi-level or three-dimensional cropping. In garden lands where a wide variety of plantation crops, fruit trees, coconut, oil palm and other tree crops are grown, it is possible to design a crop canopy in which the vertical space is utilized more efficiently.

c) Kitchen gardening and home fish gardening. If planned intelligently and scientifically, backyard gardens, roof gardens, and other methods of growing vegetables and fruits in whatever space is available can make a substantial contribution to improve nutrition. Where ponds are available in large numbers, home fish gardening can be an excellent method of supplementing income and sources of food.

d) Forestry and agro-forestry. It is important to improve the productivity of forest canopies. Agro-forestry has been defined as a management system which increases overall production, combines agricultural crops-tree crops- forest plants- animals simultaneously or sequentially.

e) Mixed farming. This system may involve crop-livestock production, crop-fish production, or crop-livestock-fish production.

f) Sea farming. This system involves an appropriate blend of capture and culture fisheries. The rate of growth of oysters, mussels, prawns, lobsters, eels and a wide variety of marine plants and animals is high in tropical seas.

As one travels across India he/she notices the differences in crop production. In areas around Aurangabad, Udaipur, and Srinagar (as well as in the State of Punjab) there is very rich top soil and harvests are bountiful. On the other hand, in the Delhi region the top soil is often poor and crop production may be minimal.

PRO-ACTIVE ACTION MODEL: Strategies to Affect Student Perceptions and Understandings

India and the rest of South Asia has great potential, and will have increasing effects upon all the world - in the years ahead. To ignore these nations, and their peoples, is to be like the ostrich that buries its head in the sand when it does not want to confront reality. In August 1982, India called for greater cooperation among South Asian nations in the fields of trade and negotiations on international economic matters.[4]

American social studies curricula (in the 1980's) are promoting the development of global citizens; young people who are aware of the world around them and who are equipped to interact with that world -- and help solve its most pressing problems.

By applying the Pro-Active Action Model (PAM) to the Kindergarten through grade twelve instructional process students can become actively involved in the identification, examination, and solution of global problems.

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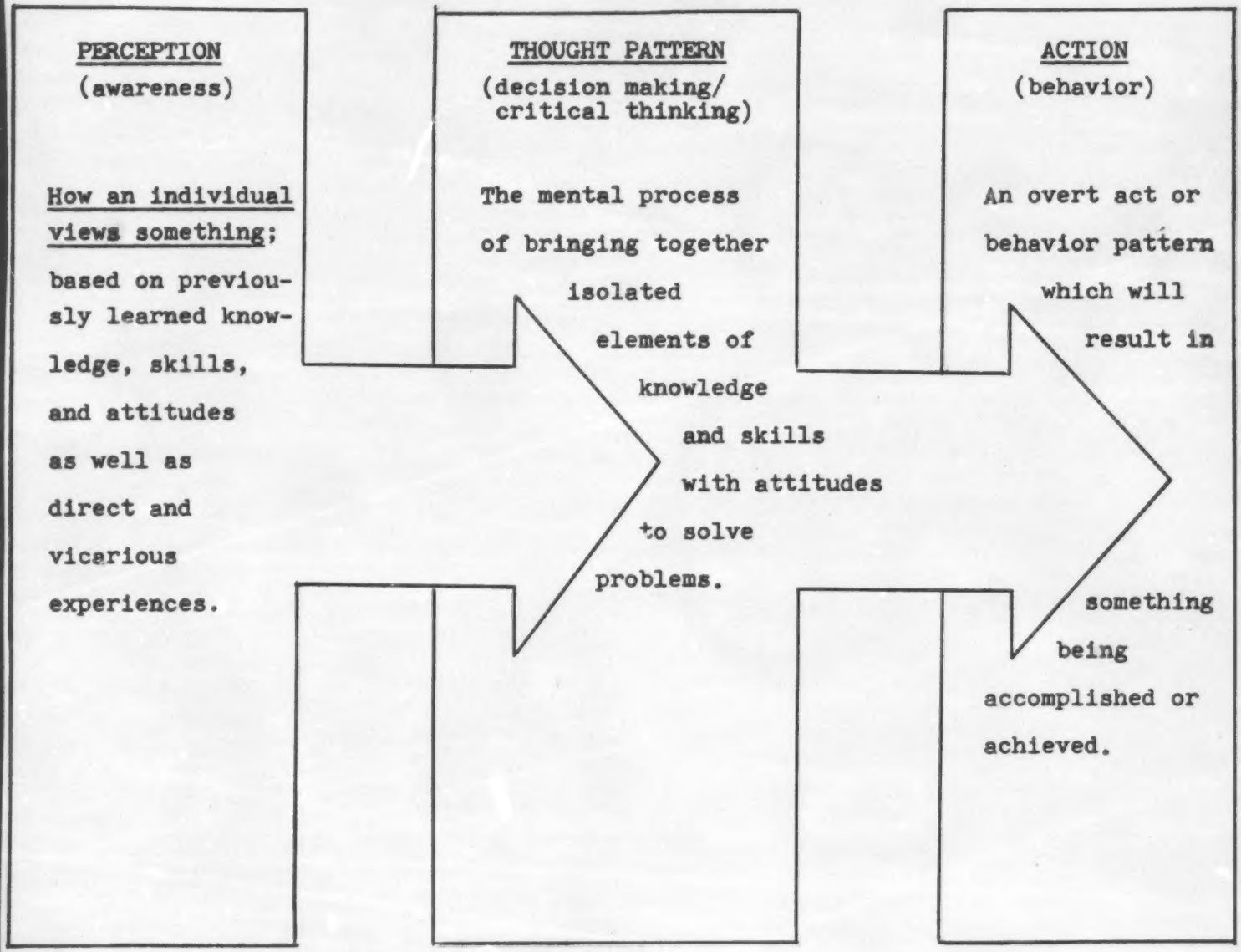
4 Indian Express, August 8, 1982, New Delhi.

DIAGRAM I: PAM MODEL


PERCEPTION
(awareness)
How an individual views something; based on previously learned knowledge, skills, and attitudes as well as direct and vicarious experiences.
THOUGHT PATTERN
(decision making/ critical thinking)
The mental process of bringing together isolated elements of knowledge and skills with attitudes to solve problems.
ACTION
(behavior)
An overt act or behavior pattern which will result in something being accomplished or achieved.

The PAM process requires that the individual classroom teacher be creative and diverse in his/her teaching strategies.

In order for any student to become a pro-active action "change agent" there is, first, a need for him/her to develop inate abilities re decision making and values clarification in numerous diverse situations. These abilities can only be developed/refined/reinforced as a result of direct involvement with activities which expose students to new information/situations and then require their direct involvement in activities development and closure.

SAMPLE UNIT[5]

AREA OF STUDY: INDIA: The Land and Its People

CONCEPT: Cultural and National Environment Interaction

PURPOSE: To acquaint students with the diverse cultural and natural environments of India.

GRADE RANGE: 3 - 12

ACTIVITIES:

1) The use of audiovisual materials (e.g., films, filmstrips, slides, videotapes) to expose students to the diverse character of India and its people.

   The use of "Images of India" slide/tape presentation to expose the viewer to the diversity of India.

2) Using globes and maps, students develop the concept of spatial relationships between India and the United States, Western Europe, China, the Soviet Union, etc.

3) Using maps of India, students study the twenty-two states and nine territories. They learn the names of these political sub-divisions.

4) Artifacts of Indian culture are brought into the classroom and students study them re the nation's history/culture.

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[5] Special thanks is given to the staff of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) for their assistance in the development of aspects of the unit.

5) Students study the geography of India -- in order to determine crop production, climate, types of housing, life styles, etc. (For example, the cooler climate of Kashmir -- with its stone/ brick houses with metal roofs. The grass huts of Tamil Nadu and its tropical crops such as bananas and coconuts.)

6) Guest speakers visit classrooms to discuss their travels in India -- and their impressions of Indian life.

7) Indian citizens living in the United States visit classrooms to discuss their homeland; its customs, history, lifestyles, values, etc.

8) Students make a large relief map of India and identify several geographical features. REPORTS CAN BE DEVELOPED.

9) Students read stories (or are read stories) about India. REPORTS CAN BE DEVELOPED.

10) A study of the major religions of India; Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Islam. REPORTS CAN BE DEVELOPED.

11) A study of the historical development of the caste system within the Hindu religion. REPORTS CAN BE DEVELOPED.

12) The students conduct an "Indian Life" day. Authentic dress of India is worn and foods from different parts of the country are sampled. Dances can also be performed -- along with records or tapes of Indian music. THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE FILMED OR VIDEO TAPED.

13) Each student selects a famous event (or personality) in Indian History and develops a report.

14) Students design and develop an India bulletin board display.

15) Students study the political system of India and compare it to that of England and the United States. Copies of the Constitution of India are studies -- and aspects of it are compared with segments of the United States Constitution. REPORTS CAN BE DEVELOPED.

16) Students study the monetary system of India (the Rupee) and compare it to that of the United States. The standard of living of the two countries is also compared.

17) A study of India since independence (1947). REPORTS CAN BE DEVELOPED.

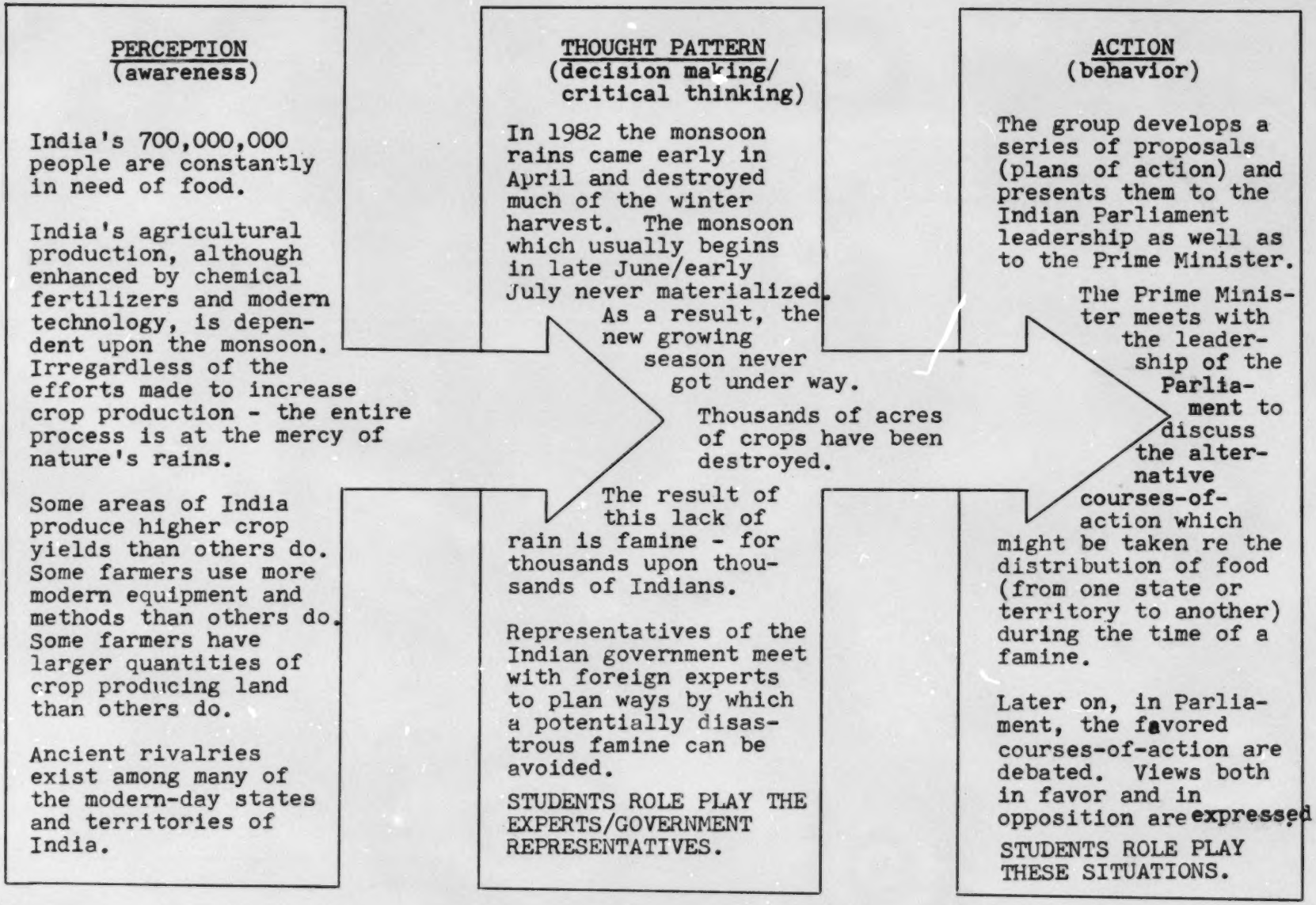
18) What does it mean to be non-aligned? To be a Third World nation? What is the Green Revolution? What is the White Revolution? REPORTS CAN BE DEVELOPED.

19) Students study the major cities of India; Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi, Madras, etc. REPORTS CAN BE DEVELOPED.

20) India is primarily a rural society; eighty per cent of its (700,000,000) people live in rural towns and villages. Students study this topic and develop reports. What is the program of rural development? Why did Mahatma Gandhi promote the development of the rural village over the further development of the urban centers?

21) Students are involved in the development and presentation of a simulated decision making situation. SEE DIAGRAM II: PAM MODEL EXAMPLE (Page 18)

DIAGRAM II: PAM MODEL EXAMPLE


PERCEPTION
(awareness)
India's 700,000,000 people are constantly in need of food.
India's agricultural production, although enhanced by chemical fertilizers and modern technology, is dependent upon the monsoon. Irregardless of the efforts made to increase crop production - the entire process is at the mercy of nature's rains.
Some areas of India produce higher crop yields than others do. Some farmers use more modern equipment and methods than others do. Some farmers have larger quantities of crop producing land than others do.
Ancient rivalries exist among many of the modern-day states and territories of India.
THOUGHT PATTERN
(decision making/
critical thinking)
In 1982 the monsoon rains came early in April and destroyed much of the winter harvest. The monsoon which usually begins in late June/early July never materialized.
As a result, the new growing season never got under way.
Thousands of acres of crops have been destroyed.
The result of this lack of rain is famine - for thousands upon thousands of Indians.
Representatives of the Indian government meet with foreign experts to plan ways by which a potentially disastrous famine can be avoided.
STUDENTS ROLE PLAY THE EXPERTS/GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES.
ACTION
(behavior)
The group develops a series of proposals (plans of action) and presents them to the Indian Parliament leadership as well as to the Prime Minister.
The Prime Minister meets with the leadership of the Parliament to discuss the alternative courses-of-action which might be taken re the distribution of food (from one state or territory to another) during the time of a famine.
Later on, in Parliament, the favored courses-of-action are debated. Views both in favor and in opposition are expressed.
STUDENTS ROLE PLAY THESE SITUATIONS.

COMMENTS

India has the distinction of having the world's oldest continuous civilization. Hinduism is considered the world's oldest religion, and Benares is the religious capital of the Hindu faith. Benares (Varanasi) is probably the oldest living city in the world!

Indian culture has recognized spirituality not only as the supreme occupation of Man but also as his all-integrating occupation. The entire spectrum of Indian culture; its religion ethics, philosophy, literature, art, architecture, dance, music, and even its political - social - economic organization, all these have been constantly influenced and moulded by the inspiring force of a multi-sided spirituality.

While India is about to step into the Twenty-First Century -- it is also rooted in the past; while its scientists are exploring the peaceful uses of the atom -- most of its small acrage farmers are tilling the soil with wooden or iron plows pulled by oxen or camels; and while Delhi readies itself for the upcoming ASIAD (November - December 1982) -- thousands of people live in the streets and beg for their daily existance. Truly, India is a land of contrasts.

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